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THE imitation by graining of the veins and other figures of handsome hardwoods, executed by hand in this country, may by a process just introduced into this country from Germany, where it is extensively adopted, be effected by greater accuracy and expedition, and at far less cost than by the ordinary method. It has been discovered that a sheet of iron pressed on a piece of polished hardwood of any description receives an exact impression of the grain, veins, knots and other figures and that this impression may be accurately transferred to a sheet of paper. An oil graining coat having been laid on a given surface, it is moistened with water or thin graining color, and the sheet is then laid upon it and evenly and lightly brushed in the direction of the grain. An exact rendering of the wood to the most minute variations of figures appear, and all that remains is to go over the whole with a blending brush, then to rub down with sandpaper and varnish. Each graining sheet which is furnished of large size, suffices for three or four impressions, and its cost is quite nominal. We welcome such an invention as certain to lead to an extension of graining and this of a superior character, presenting the manifold beautiful forms of nature. The woods in stock are oak, walnut, ash and maple of different descriptions, and mahogany, rose and cherry wood.

VARNISH of all kinds should be uniformly applied in very thin coats, and sparingly on the edges and angles where it is likely to accumulate. The brush at commencing should be placed at some little distance from the edge of the panel and steady and rapid strokes be directed towards each end alternately. A brush may be passed, however, over a small surface in one operation, and this a second or third time to distribute the varnish uniformly and to work out the air bubbles. The second series of strokes on such surfaces may be made at right angles to the first, and the third in a similar direction to the first so as to secure an even surface. The work must be done quickly.

ARTISTIC taste is gradually finding its way into the kitchen. Veritable sideboards are now constructed to supersede the ordinary kitchen dresser, the material being pine. A cupboard with doors of speckled cathedral glass, in diamond-shape and leaden frame, is set in the center of the shelves. The shelves themselves conveniently widen in their ascent thus overlapping each other. A deep drawer occupies the space below to

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right and left of the sideboard dresser, and there is a shallower center drawer for table linen. The capacious space beneath is set off with an embroidered curtain, hung on rings that slide along a brass rod. The shelves are supplied with cheap specimens of Daulton or other attractive ware to be interspersed among the dishes. The sideboard dresser top may be painted green, the wall of the kitchen which forms the backing an olive, whilst to accord with the cheerful glow of color afforded, stencilled decorations may be carried out on each side of the sideboard, several feet high above the chair rail the full length of the wall.

IN no branch of church decorative art has greater progress been shown than in bringing designs and colorings of stained windows into harmony with interiors. Their suitability as memorials of the departed has done much as a motive in beautifying these structures. The brilliancy of the old colored glass has been obtained and the colors of antiquity secured in increased richness, the ruby alone excepted, but in this color manufacturers are approaching the ancient standard. There is something in the undulating and imperfect glass of the fourteenth century which renders it better calculated for subdued and varied effects than the more perfect glass of modern times, and the problem of realizing those effects is now being attempted to be solved. The triumph of decorative treatment in glass is the disposition of colors without crudity, the introduction of shadows without blackness, and such a dexterous treatment of color as to impart to the design unity of effect.

HIGHLY decorative effects may be obtained by crystalizing surfaces of paper and wood. A temple in cardboard, an aquarium frame, dado panels, chair rail, picture frames, and a number of other objects may thus be beautified. Different hues may be introduced. For a beautiful bright mother-of-pearl coating mix a very concentrated cold solution of salt with dextrose, and lay the thinnest possible coating of the fluid on the surface to be covered by means of a broad, soft brush. Sulphate of magnesia, acetate of soda and sulphate of tin will produce the most beautiful hues. Paper must first be sized, otherwise it will absorb the fluid and prevent the formation of crystals on its surface. Colored glass is well adapted to such a coating, which has a good effect when the light shines through. It may thus be applied to colored lamp shades or stained glass borders of windows. Designs may be executed in which the several solutions are introduced.

AN artistic friend, who lately came into possession of a large number of Japanese colored mounted designs of similar size and representing different series of subjects, ordered an octagonal brass hanging lamp for his hall, the lamp to be provided with grooves in which to insert the paintings. Thus on certain nights the illuminated lamp presents a flowery aspect, at other times tableaux of domestic scenes, games, industries, landscapes, sea-views and so forth, including grotesques. The idea is a suggestive one as the plan offers an aspect of variety to what is usually unchangeable, and subjects could be painted for the purpose on movable glass panels.

AN expert in the decorative application of gilding to relief work in combination with color recently remarked that he never put a speck of gilt on a molding poor in form, and lumpy, and bad in workmanship, as such accentuation of the form, by increasing the contrast of light and shade, would serve to attract attention to what should be carefully subdued by color. Color judiciously applied will do much to remedy faults in moulding, as by relieving undue heaviness by light tints, and in strengthening by good contrasting hues an essentially weak design.

IT appears to us that there is ample room for more variety and picturesque effect in the rockwork provided for fern cases. A few set types of forms with slight variations are generally followed. Amateurs should bring their constructive skill to bear in rendering their fern cases in this respect as attractive as possible. The rockwork, here and there, may be touched off with good effect with brilliant metallic colors. Many fern cases can be improved with a transparent landscape or sea scene painted on glass background.

A PLEASING mode of decorating the pier between two windows is to cover the space to be ornamented with tulle having large meshes. This at a short distance does not hide the coloring and figures on the wall, and makes an excellent groundwork on which autumn leaves and ferns can be pinned to form highly attractive designs.

HAVE we not too much of stenciling on walls and ceilings instead of freehand painting? A good designer will get over the work almost as quickly as with stencils, and, what is more, will break in on the undeviating regularity of the pattern and give something like expressional character to his work. There is nothing to beat the decisive touch of the hand guided by the eye and brain. With practice in freehand painting would come the requisite confidence. We don't suppose there is a stencilplate in the whole archipelago of Japan.

THE scheme of the frieze of a New York armory hall just completed is that of illustrating, in a series of medallions, the gradual development of the art of war from the club of the savage and the scythed chariot of the Romans on to modern rifles and cannon, but the small scale on which these medallions are painted—the chief space being given to scroll-work—renders the objects obscure at the distance at which they are placed, and, excellent as was the idea of a historic processional frieze, it fails of its intended effect.

HARMONY in covering furniture may be produced otherwise than by covering it all with the same piece and hanging up curtains to match; a variety of changes may be rung in if only one color be dominant. For instance, yellow may lead up to green, silver gray up to purple, and Venetian red up to brown, but the subordinate tints in each case should have a certain affinity to the dominant color, and when this is settled a little bit of contrast introduced, provided it be unobtrusive, will have a cheerful effect.

ARCHITECTURAL styles cannot ordinarily be carried out in dwelling rooms with any good results except perhaps in the mantel which is essentially structural. As to the mantel it may be questioned whether it is in the best artistic taste to employ for it composite materials. The most imposingly attractive mantels we have seen consisted exclusively of wood, marble or terra cotta. Variety of material and color is abundantly supplied by the many other objects in a handsomely furnished room.

ORNAMENT should not only be beautiful in itself, but in form, design and color should not degenerate into any set fashion. Being always relative to the subject to which it is applied, whether varying a surface or emphasizing structural features, its suitability to its position becomes an important factor in determining whether it should be approved. It must be more than interesting in itself.

IT is with colors as with every form of art, it can only be handled properly by those who delight in it. Formerly England grasped one idea about color, that bright colors are the most attractive, and its artistic decorators tried to have as many of them as possible. The error was in the deduction made. Bright, pure colors are the basis of richness and purity of hue, but their successful use demands a delicate handling of subordinate hues and tints.

IN decorating textile stuffs with embroidery one should not be debarred from indicating let us say, for instance, the rotundity of buds and fruits by a few dark threads, but there should be no attempt to give the effect of distance by the opposition of light and dark colors, and, above all, there should be no receding backgrounds or perspective in the pictorial sense of the word.

WE should have more mural and ceiling decoration in our offices. The feeling that decoration so far as internal fittings are concerned is out of place has long gone by, but prejudices still linger in favor of expanses unadorned on walls and ceilings, as if good ornament there would be a reflection on the commercial spirit of the occupants.

DECORATION has not inaptly been compared to a tree the roots of which are supplied by the knowledge and feeling of the artist, the branches being the framework, the leaves the background, the flowers the various subjects, and the fruit, if there is any, the influence on the temperaments and the mind.

THE grace of lineal harmony is that which is most requisite in design. This is greatly dependent on proportion for which no rules can be laid down to meet particular instances, but which must be the result of observation and experience and a delicate intuitive sense of beauty.